

JULY 2009

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2. The particular angle from which something is considered.

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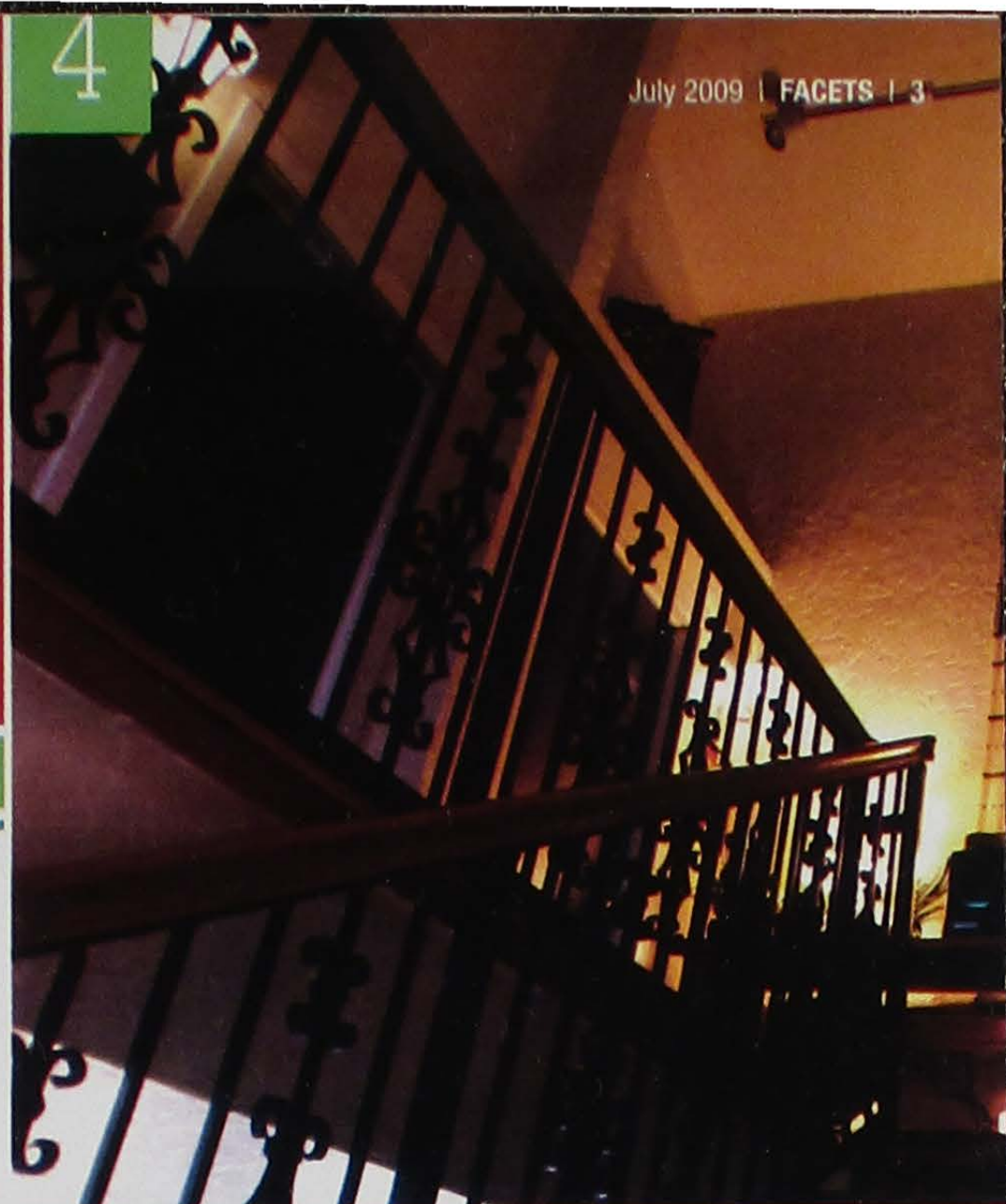
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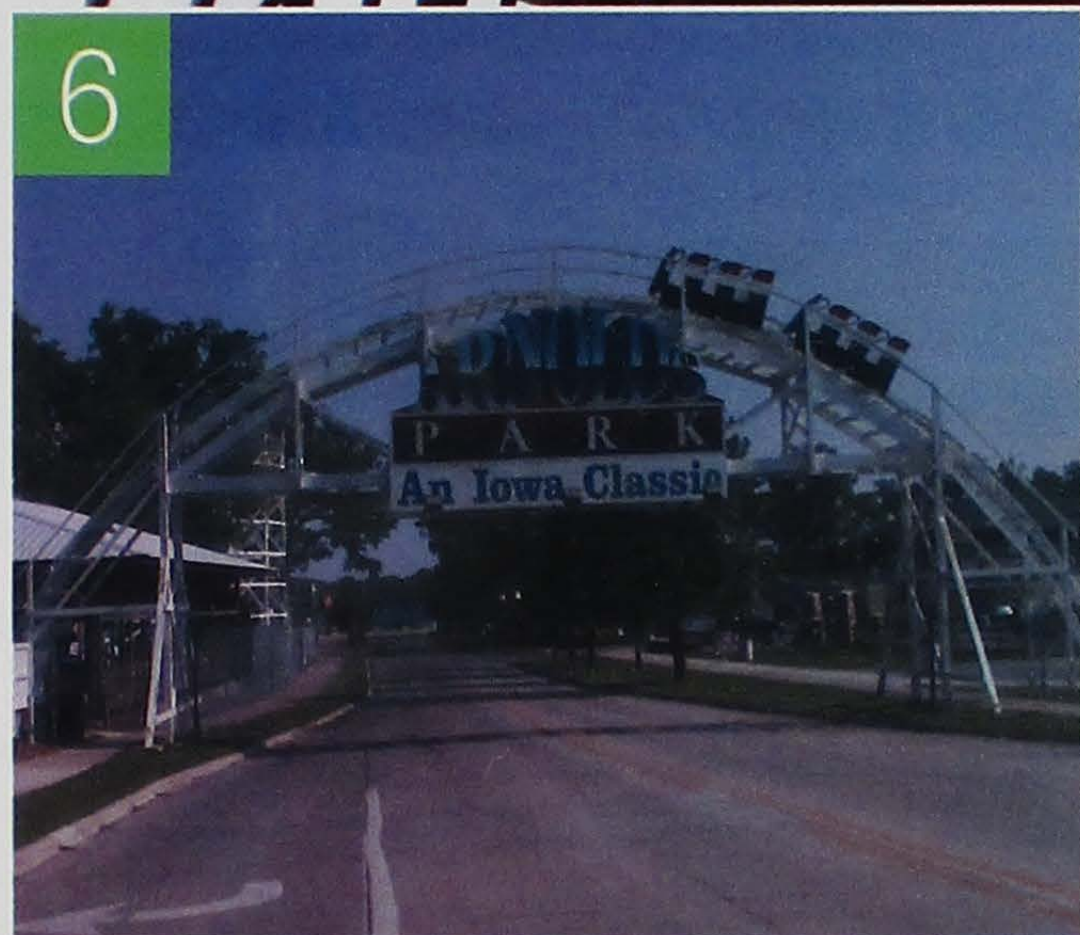
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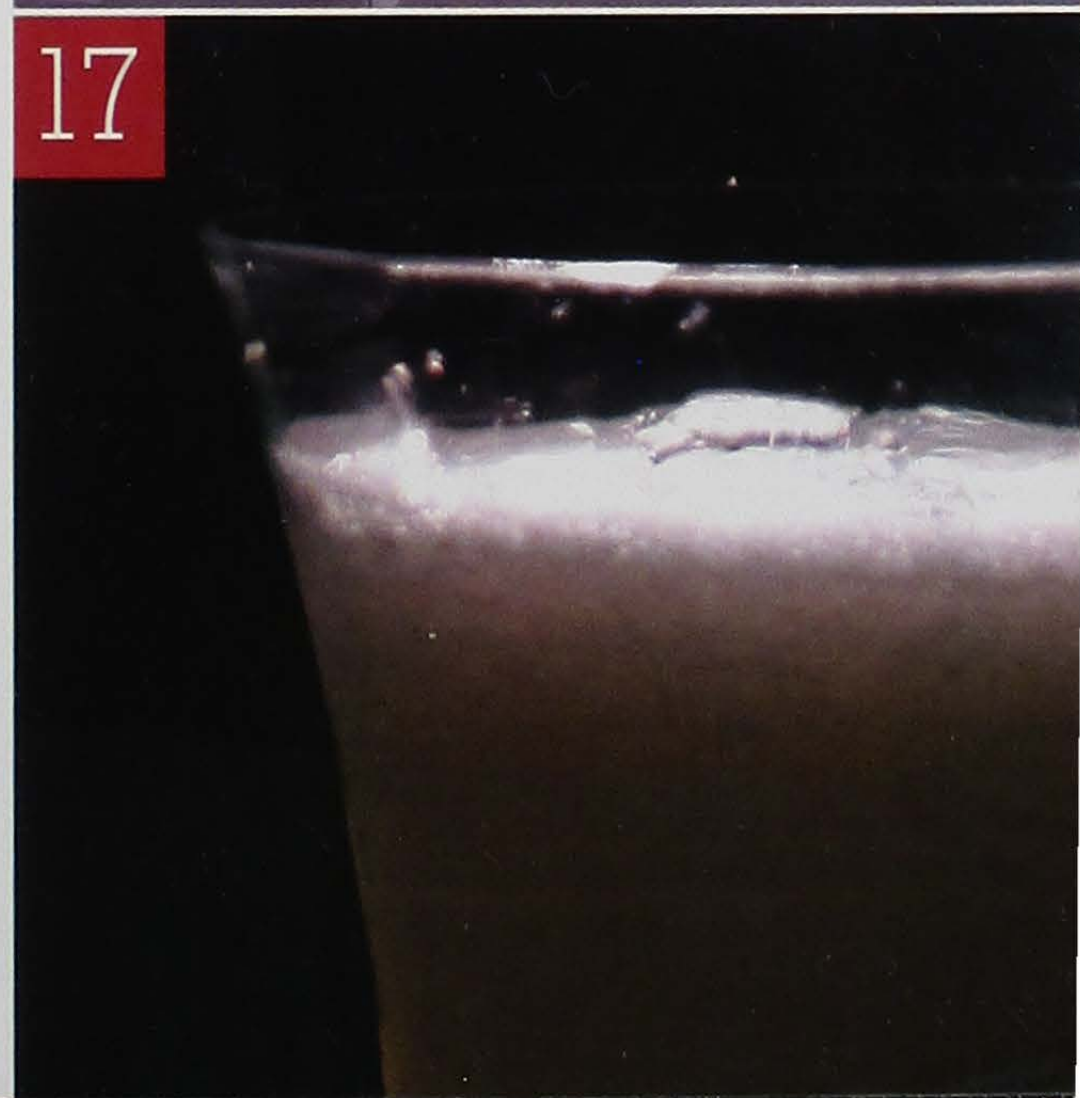
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Close-to-home getaways **gaining popularity in troubled economy**

By MARY HALSTRUM
Facets Editor

Is money a little tight this year in your vacation budget? Well, you're not alone. Summer getaways, curtailed last year due to \$4 a gallon gas prices, have been dialed down yet again due to a troubled economy. Many are choosing close-to-home getaways or staycations instead of the 10-day travel across the country vacation.

The Montebello Bed & Breakfast Inn in Ames has seen its business increase during the economic downturn. While the inn has seen business traffic slide, personal and Iowa State University traffic has gone up.

"You can get out of the rat race here," said Daphne Reyes, co-owner of the inn. "Where the pavement ends, the good life begins."

The Montebello has been in Ames for eight years. Driving to the Inn, located off 530th Avenue, don't blink or you just might miss the turnoff onto the little gravel road leading to the salmon colored inn. One of the first things visitors see is a pond, an idyllic scene fit for any postcard. The pond is used to provide geothermal heat and air-conditioning for the inn.

"We created this place so we could have somewhere to act as a host for the world's guests," Daphne, who is originally from Texas, said. Her husband, Jaime, is from Monterrey, Mexico. "We're far from where we called home, but this is what we prefer to call home now."

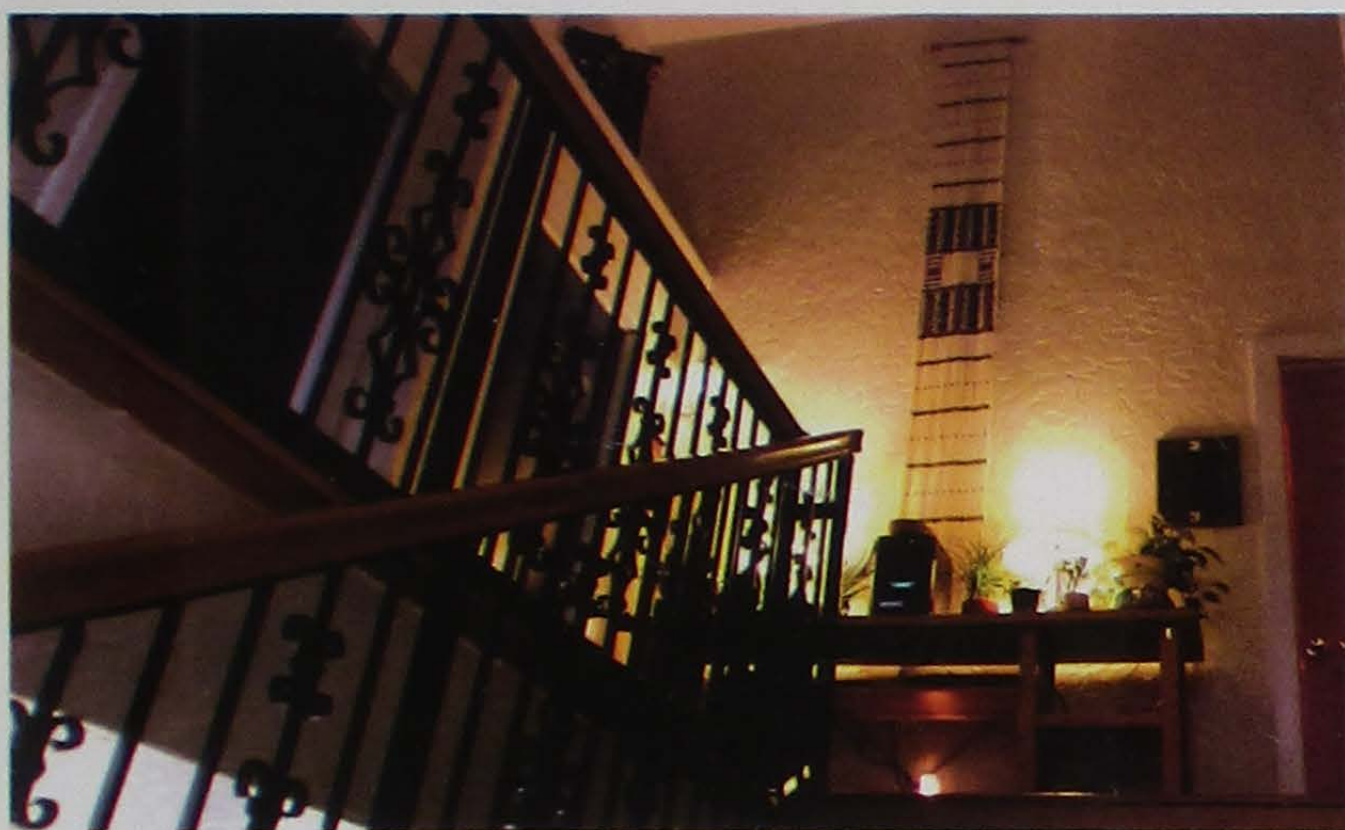
The Montebello's rooms all have a Mexican theme. There's the Tabasco room, the Oaxaca room, the Chiapas room, the Veracruz room and the Yucatan room. Prices vary depending upon which room you book. The average visitor stays for two or three days.

"It feels a lot more like home here," said Sasha Pira, a Montebello employee who attends ISU.



"Daphne and Jaime make you feel like family right away," said Kathy Beckerleg, another Montebello employee. "It's a very interesting job. I don't really think of it as a job until I have to clean a room."

"They are such friendly, helpful people. It has a homey feeling."
Lauren Breakell



Photos by Ronnie Miller

Most visitors who stay at the Montebello sign the guest book. One in particular wrote the inn is "like a little slice of heaven."

"Locals come to spend one or two nights here just to get away from home," Jaime said.

Lauren Breakell, from Virginia, stayed at the Montebello during a trip to Ames for the Odyssey of the Mind World Finals in late May. Her son Jackson, 10, was participating in the event.

"They are such friendly, helpful people. It has a homey feeling," Breakell, who stayed in the Tabasco room, said. "It's very comfortable here. I have DIRECTV in my room. One of the true tests at a place I stay is the water pressure, and it's great here."

Breakell said she also likes how the inn is located within walking distance of the university.

"I'll be back, but next time I'll book way in advance recalling how she got her reservation due to a cancellation."

The Montebello is also available for weddings and other special events. For more information, call (515) 296-2181 or e-mail info@montebellobandinn.com.

Jaime and Daphe Reyes, owners of Montebello Bed & Breakfast Inn, and their employees, Kathy Beckerleg, (far left) and Sasha Pira (far right).



BOJOJI FUN

By NICOLE LENZ

Summer is upon us and it's time to seize that warm Iowa sunshine. For many, summer is full of barbecues and Iowa Cubs games in hopes of making the most out of local fun. Yet some still yearn for that yearly summer trip to get away and relax. Luckily, there are many great vacation spots right here in Iowa that won't break the bank.

Okoboji is a great summer spot that allows for fun of all varieties. Children will love the many beaches, parks and of course the infamous Arnold's Amusement Park. To top it all off, there is no shortage of ice cream shops, candy nooks and ballpark franks to recharge the batteries at the end of a busy day. For those who love to kick back and relax, the rolling waters of Lake Okoboji lend a calming ambience to the area. A mere three-hour drive from Ames, this is a great summer getaway.

ARNOLD'S PARK

A great attraction since the 1800s, people have enjoyed this park for many years. What started as a water park is now chock full of thrilling rides for all ages. Take a ride on the ferris wheel overlooking the lake, take a slanted walk through the Topsy House, ride the roller coaster or just soak in the area. Children will go wild for the many rides, games and shows and parents can join in the fun as well. Parking is absolutely free, so whether you buy a day pass or pay for each ride as you go, the experience won't cost you an arm and a leg. A truly great affair for all vacationers, this is one of the many great stops in Okoboji. Learn more at www.arnoldspark.com/index.php.



GOLFING

Okoboji is the home of many golf courses suited to any ability. Emerald Hills, a beautiful 18-hole golf course just a mile from Arnolds Park, is open to anyone looking to indulge in a day of leisure.

Brooks Golf Club, a semi-private golf course, is also open to the public seven days a week. This course, given 4 1/2 stars by Golf Digest, is full of beautiful plant life, which adds a beautiful background to the area.

Okoboji View offers many activities and events throughout the summer. Couples nights, best shot, and tournaments add a little excitement to this 18-hole course. Open to the public, these courses are a great way to soak in some sun.

TREASURE VILLAGE

For those who aren't privy to the real golf courses, this attraction offers a 27-hole mini golf course for all ages. Each hole is decorated with storybook themes and characters from children's tales. Humpty Dumpty sits on a wall while the Mad Hatter's Tea Party offers a diversion to one mini golf challenge. A Children's Theatre offers various plays that feature audience involvement, drawings and even popcorn! Top of the day with some of their hand dipped ice cream to cool off from the excitement.

DINING AND DESSERT

Top off a day at Arnold's Park with a stop at the Nutty Bar stand just feet from the park entrance. Or, stop by the Black Walnut Candy Shop just a few steps away for yummy salt water taffy and fudge. If a hearty meal is what you're after, many original restaurants in the area will cater to any taste. Tweeters, an Okoboji sports bar and restaurant, has recently remodeled and is looking better than ever. The servers don "No Sniveling" T-shirts that are iconic of the restaurant along with the legendary Tweeter Burger, a hamburger topped with peanut butter (don't knock it until you try it.). If Mexican food is in the plan, Mrs. Lady's Mexican restaurant is where it's at. A menu full of hearty foods and tangy margaritas keeps this place going year after year.

BAR HOP

A city that is no stranger to fun, there are various venues ready for a party. The Barefoot Bar overlooks the water from the shelter of large Tiki huts. With many tables, a full bar and a range of food available, this is a great way to get into the lakeside mood. Open all day, nights and weekends usually lend to entertainment, such as karaoke or a live band. The Ritz is another waterside bar that offers fish bowls, great food and fun. If the weather gets rainy relax inside, watch a game and socialize. The Gardens is a bar and restaurant located on the lower level of the Emporium, the shopping center near Arnolds Park. Frequently live bands rock the house and the dance floor thrives. During the day or on warm nights, the patio overlooking the lake is a perfect place to unwind.



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Maintaining weight loss on Caribbean cruise challenging

By CANDY ANDERSON

Say the words "Caribbean Cruise" and visions of opulent décor, balmy weather, exciting Ports of Call and food ... lots and lots of food ... come to mind. When my husband and I recently went on a six-day cruise we chose it for all those amenities. But, since I had started a "get fit" program in January and had successfully lost more than 20 pounds, I was concerned about the food visions I was having. Could I spend six days on a cruise ship where food is available at every turn (literally) and continue my new "get fit" way of life? Could I resist the midnight buffets, the ice cream machine by the pools, the array of desserts available everywhere, the freshly-baked gourmet pizzas, the five-star entrees presented each evening, and the ever-flowing frosty beverages? Could I find, and, more importantly, would I choose whole grain items, fresh fruits and vegetables, and lean proteins simply prepared without sauces and extra calories added? And, would I continue to exercise somehow each day as I had been doing at home?

Thus, my challenge began and I created a game plan that I would follow during our trip. First, I would strive to come home weighing the same or less than when I left. Second, I would be conscious of the eating plan I follow at home, but I wouldn't obsess over it ... after all this is vacation. Third, I would continue to walk for exercise as I was doing at home. Fourth, I would stay hydrated. So, with my newly-formed plan in hand, I boarded the ship.

The ship we chose offers a "vitality" program, which includes meal programs, fitness activities and spa services for those guests interested in an overall "feel good" experience. Within an hour of boarding we headed to our first buffet lunch and many of my fears were alleviated. Sure, there were plenty of mayonnaise-laden salads, fried entries and dazzling, devastating desserts but there were also mountains of fresh greens and large displays of freshly prepared vegetables and fruits. I could choose any number of grilled meat and seafood items, along with herbs, vinegars and oils and low-fat dressings to create a wonderful, fit-friendly entrée. "OK", I was thinking, "Day 1, Meal 1, and I'm good."

Cruising has always seemed a good value to us. We have planned trips involving long drives, flights, multiple connections and advance reservations. We have paid for each meal and every beverage we drank, the entertainment we wanted to see and every pillow we laid our heads on. And we have been shocked at how costly our vacation was. When we cruise, all those details are taken care of for us for one fee. The drawback might be that one can board a ship with an



*"OK", I was thinking,
"Day 1, Meal 1, and
I'm good."*

"I've paid for it, I'm going to eat it" attitude. As we toured the ship it became very evident that there would be plenty of opportunities to "get our money's worth."

A boulevard deck featuring many sidewalk cafes, eateries, pubs and coffee house offered an assortment of tempting culinary delights. Hungry for pizza, Caesar salad, antipasto, fresh mozzarella and maybe some tiramisu? Need a little afternoon break? How about coffee or tea with one (or two or three) of the freshly baked scones, biscotti, muffins or cheesecakes? Wanting to relax in your room a bit? Just call for room service 24/7. So, how did all this fit into my plan? I enjoyed the selection and I appreciated the culinary artistry at each little sidewalk café, but I knew the value of this vacation would be in the sights I saw and the experiences I would bring home and not in the number of calories I could consume in a week's time. I chose wisely when I was hungry and when I wasn't, I absorbed the sights, sounds and aromas of this delightful area of the ship.

I would have to say that my real downfall on past cruises has been my mission to let no food go untouched at dinners in the dining room. Multiple selections of appetizers, salads, soups, entrees and desserts are available each evening, and I am embarrassed to say how many times we have ordered more than one item from each category. Our philosophy has been that we may never have another chance to try Escargot Bourguignon or wild mushroom feuilletée or some other delectable item. And so our week would go, with both of us eating an exorbitant amount of food each evening and then waddling out of the dining room feeling very sated but miserably full.

How nice it was this time to have a plan that made me think in advance about how I would handle the evening meal philosophy of the past. First, there were plenty of flaws in the "I-may-never-get-to-eat-this-again" theory. We love cruising. We will be back and there will always be wonderful food available. If I didn't eat it this time, I would have a chance to eat it another time, and even if I didn't, was that really a big deal? I think not, considering everything I did eat was out-of-this-world scrumptious.

Our first evening meal allowed me to reinforce my plan by providing many "vitality"

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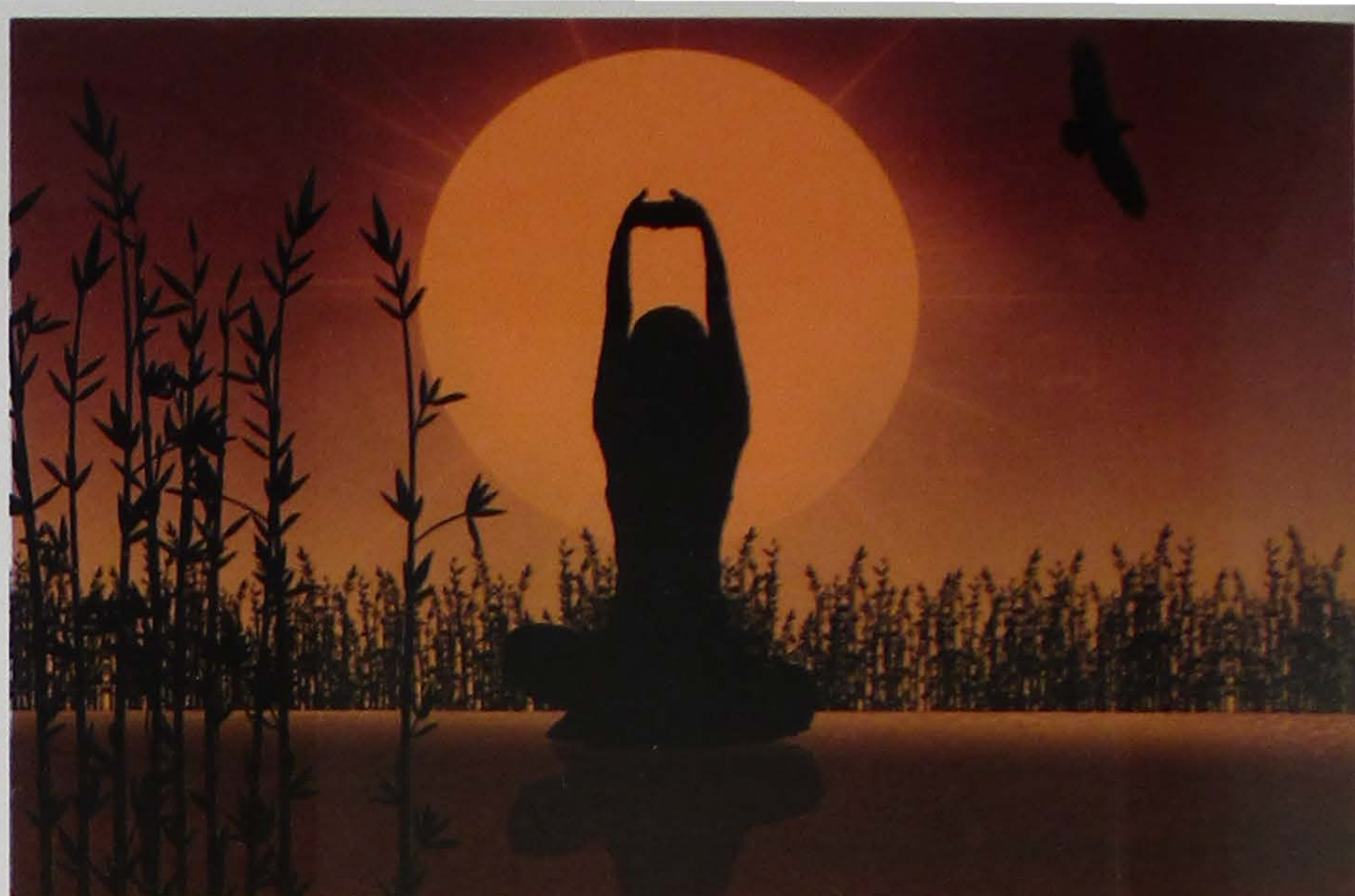
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selections that were creative and well-prepared. I enjoyed a delicious grilled salmon entrée the first night that was accompanied by fresh asparagus. Melon with prosciutto was an appetizer and a lightly dressed salad rounded out the menu. I was in culinary heaven, pleasingly full and energetic as we scurried out of the dining room to find the evening's entertainment. And I was thrilled to feel that way. In fact, I enjoyed fresh seafood or poultry each evening, always prepared in a way that was perfect for my personal dietary guidelines. I enjoyed appetizers, salads, some wine and even a few light desserts, but I never let myself slip into the ways of the past. For that, I felt successful, with or without the confirmation of my bathroom scale.

"I've paid for it, I'm going to eat it"

The ports of call on a cruise offer travelers an opportunity to immerse themselves in the cultures of the area and with that comes cuisine that might not be fit-friendly. I searched each day for seafood, bean or vegetable entrees that would satisfy me without packing on pounds and we walked...a lot. Our day in Costa Maya, though, was a planned "forget the rules and enjoy the experience day." We were fortunate to have the opportunity to enjoy dinner in a local Mayan family's home. I relished every bite of the Adobe chicken, made-with-my-own-hands tortillas, black beans, hibiscus tea and the most decadent, unbelievably delicious flan I had ever indulged in. A large part of that day was spent hiking and climbing up and down the ruins, a good thing considering the meal.

There is a long-standing cruise ship joke that one should always pack at least one pair of elastic-waist pants and save them for the end of the cruise. That hasn't been so funny for us in the past. But this time both my husband and I noticed we were comfortable flying home in the same clothes we had started out with. And although I wasn't all that anxious to climb on the scales, there was a little bit of anticipation building as we left the airport after our final touch down. Had I made the right choices, drank enough water, walked as many miles as I thought I had? The challenge was to weigh the same or less when I returned so what would the omnipotent scale say? We arrived home tanned, tired and relaxed but were we maybe just a tad bit lighter, too? I stepped on the scale and braced myself for the results: Down one pound!



Recession-proof getaways

By DEBRA ATKINSON, MS, CSCS

Few are not affected in some way by these economic times. Getting away may take on a different meaning this summer. For whatever reasons, maybe the kids' activities, the toddler that's a handful at home let alone on a plane, trains and automobiles. There are some ways to get away for a little vacation without breaking the bank or requiring hired help.

Pranayama is most frequently associated with yoga. Yet it also has the power to relax in and of itself or to also be a part of meditation. There are different styles of pranayama, each said to have its own benefits. Following are two to try.

Three-part deep breathing: This is the foundation of all yoga breathing. First, breathe in filling the diaphragm, filling the stomach with air. Then continue by filling the chest cavity with air. Finally, lift the shoulders to complete the breath and pull the last bit of oxygen into your lungs. You can place a hand on your belly, and one on your rib cage for the first few breaths. Then move one hand to your chest to experience the three-part breath in full effect. Imagine your lungs filling like a balloon in 360 degrees. Many people breathe using only about 1/3 of their lung capacity.

Alternate nostril breathing: Initially, the right hand is placed over the nose with the thumb on the right nostril and the third finger on the left nostril. Close the right nostril and breathe in through the left. Next, block the left and exhale through the right. Breathe in through the right and then block the right exhaling through the left. Repeat the cycle five to 10 times. This type of breathing practice is said to balance the parasympathetic and sympathetic nervous system, reducing heart rate and blood pressure.

Focus on a drishti. You don't have to quote unquote meditate to use the benefit of a drishti to calm the mind and find focus. The drishti is

used in yoga for finding focus or directing energy. Ultimately, it goes outward and then comes back inward much like a vacation might in the end. You go away to actually find yourself again. Two drishtis are listed below.

The sky: While you're walking or lying in the grass on your back, let yourself gaze on the horizon and play in the clouds.

Your hand: Whether you're in a yoga pose or not keeping your gaze on your hand can help bring better focus and concentration.

Meditation is becoming a topic of conversation and an area of interest among those looking to deepen their wellness in addition to their physical fitness. Meditation is something that can't be taught as much as it must be acquired through practice and awareness. "Life is meditation," according to Ganga White in his book "Yoga Beyond Belief." Though there is a sense of mystery surrounding meditation, its definition is illusive. You may already be doing it. It isn't a focus or a clearing of the mind either one but an awareness of the thoughts that come in and out of the mind like waves. Meditation is the sense of those thoughts and awareness of them without attachment to them. Many longer distance runners or swimmers may encounter such states of meditation regularly. Endurance activities or activities that allow complete relaxation can foster meditation. The less you try, the more likely you are to be meditating. Historically, traditional yogis perform meditation in a cross legged seated position. Few real people can maintain such a posture without attaching thoughts to their discomfort after a short time.

Try combining two or three of these vacations for a mind body experience that serves as an escape. It will be time well spent, economical, and always available to you. You can book your flight at any time and always have the window seat.

ARCHITECTURALLY CHALLENGED

By PEGGY BEST

Just about every time I travel to a different city, I find myself architecturally challenged. For example, I was in Denver recently and stopped for lunch at a delicatessen. I excused myself from the table to use the restroom. After being directed down the hall to the first door on the right, I found myself in a large bathroom with a sliding wall for the door and a giant metal piece to serve as the door “knob” if you will. I slid the wall closed and spend the next five minutes trying to figure out how to lock it. The toilet was at least eight feet from the door, so there was no possibility of blocking the door with my foot. I finally gave up and just decided to eat my meal in bladder distress. Others in my group excused themselves and returned to the table without a hint of looking confused or exasperated, so I assumed they must have figured out the trick. Not to be outdone, before we left, I ventured back to the hallway and plainly saw a large sign on the outside of the door “restroom busy when door is shut.” Well, it had been that easy the whole time.

Last year, I was again visiting Denver (maybe it's just Denver that confuses me) and ate at a very posh new restaurant with my son and his friend. It had gold-tinted windows so the room was awash in a warm glow with the afternoon sunshine. It had real trees growing inside up through the wood floor, and it was quite a site to behold. As we chatted with our waitress about all the interesting architecture, she said, “You’ve just got to check out the bathroom sink! You won’t believe it!” After we ate, my son’s friend excused herself, came back and said, “She’s right, it’s awesome. You’ll never believe it – and you really have to hunt to find the door!” I couldn’t wait to get back there and check it out. I was curious about her comment about finding the door, and after walking down a short hallway to the back of the restaurant, I found an entire wall that looked like tree trunks. The only indication a door existed in this wall was a very small metal “M” and “W,” and you push the wall and the door opened. I walked into a large room with walls of glass tile – some colored, some frosted, some clear, a toilet, and what looked like a block of wood. “Hmmm,” I said to myself as I assumed the block of wood must somehow be the sink. I looked closely; it still looked like a block of wood. I tipped it on its side, still just a block of wood. Well, then it must be something in the wall! I pushed every tile in the room, thinking a sink would somehow pop out of the wall. Nothing. Feeling quite frustrated and questioning what I thought was my average IQ, I walked out of the restroom only to see before me this huge metal tub with hundreds of chains hanging from the ceiling. I believe I had found the sink! I had totally missed it walking into the restroom as I was so transfixed on finding the door. It had been outside the bathroom door the entire time. So I found the sink, but I still couldn’t figure out how it worked. As I stood there and pondered my situation, the waitress came by and said “Cool, isn’t it?” I must have given her a very bewildered look because she leaned past me and pulled on what looked like a big pepper mill, and water poured from the ceiling down the chains. Wow, it really was cool.

You wouldn’t think that mirrors would be a challenge for most people either, however, my famous mirror incident is definitely my most embarrassing moment ever (at least so far). Several years ago I was in San Diego (at least I’m capable of embarrassing myself in more than one city), at a big conference where I knew not one soul. I have always been self-conscious about going to these big dinners with complete strangers. You want to make sure you order something that won’t be messy to eat, and you hope that you can contribute to the conversation in some way without sounding like a complete idiot. You get the picture. There were 20 of us at a large table in a restaurant that was actually an old light house with windows all the way around where you could watch ships come into the harbor. Being an Iowa girl, I thought that was very impressive, and was listening intently as our host described the different ships coming in and going out. Among all these big ships was a speedboat and our host explained to us that when a naval ship arrives, and before it enters the harbor, the captain is picked up outside of the bay by a speedboat displaying a large American flag. The boat brings the captain onto shore first, before the naval ship enters. As he was pointing out to us the speedboat with the big American flag, I turned my head and saw one on the other side, and said “Hey, there’s another captain going



back out to his ship!” Everyone turned to see, then looked at me when the realization came that I was looking into a mirror that ran down the middle of the restaurant. If I could have slid under the table and died right then, it wouldn’t have been too soon.

I’ll admit that it’s the architecture that usually stumps me, but I can embarrass myself in other ways also. Either I didn’t hear well, or I wasn’t paying very good attention. I was going through a reception line at a conference, being introduced and introducing myself to the conference hosts. I got about halfway through the line when an older gentleman took my hand and gently shaking it said to me “Hello. I’m in love.” I didn’t know how to respond. I was completely at a loss to say anything and thought it was a pretty unusual and a very bold thing to say. So I just gave him a strange look and without saying a word, slowly withdrew my hand from his and went on to the next person. Then behind me he took the next person’s hand and said “Hello, I’m Ben Love.” Did I mention that this was the San Diego conference and Mr. Love ended up being the host at our table in the restaurant mentioned earlier?

I’m not really sure there is a moral to this story, other than I function the best when I stay put in Ames – where sinks are sinks, doors are doors, and I know my way around most restaurants and shops. Well, except for that time I walked straight into a mirror at a store downtown

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Eating on the *run*

By AMY CLARK, RD, LD

While vacations often result in following different schedules and eating different foods, your vacation doesn't have to be a dieting disaster. With a little effort, you can stick to a healthful meal plan.

Start by creating an eating itinerary. Vacations tend to provide endless opportunities to eat ... and eat ... and eat. Strive to maintain a regular meal pattern by scheduling your activities around three meals. You may also want to consider keeping a portable snack on hand. Incorporate one or two small snacks into your day to avoid getting overly hungry, which can result in overeating at your next meal or resorting to an expensive, high-fat snack. Try these healthy snack options:

- Fiber bar
- Quaker breakfast cookie
- Granola
- Pretzels
- Whole grain crackers
- Fresh fruit
- Mozzarella string cheese
- Nuts
- Trail mix

Order smart. You can enjoy a delicious brunch or even midnight buffet if you learn to balance high- and low-calorie foods throughout the day. If you know you will be enjoying something special at dinner, try to eat a lighter breakfast and lunch. Load up on dishes that are packed with steamed vegetables and whole grains. And don't be scared to make a special request: ask for low-fat dressings; substitute fruit, a baked potato or salad for fries; order a grilled sandwich without cheese; or request gravy on the side. These small changes will help keep you on track. And remember, the trick to enjoying high-calorie foods is to choose small portions.

Listen to your stomach. Don't let what is left on your plate determine your fullness — chances are the portions you've been served are double what you need. Consider asking for a half order, asking the waiter to box half of the meal before serving it or split a meal or dessert with a friend or family member. Drink at least two glasses of water or enjoy a broth-based soup before the meal to help you get full. As always, chew your food slowly and enjoy what you are eating.

Exercise. Whether you are at the beach, museum or theme park, walking can easily be incorporated into your day. Many hotels have a pool or fitness facility, or you could consider visiting a local gym or club. The more calories you burn, the more you earn.

Remember that vacation only lasts a few weeks



out of the year, so don't worry too much. If you follow a healthful meal plan during the rest of the year, you can "afford" to relax and enjoy your favorite treats.

This information is not intended as medical advice. Please consult a medical professional for individual advice.

Fishy fruit trail mix

Serves: 16

All you need:

- 4 c. Quaker Toasted Oatmeal Squares cereal
- 1 c. dried banana chips
- 1/2 c. dried blueberries
- 1 c. mixed nuts
- 1 1/2 c. Goldfish Colors snack crackers

All you do:

Combine all ingredients in a large sealable plastic bag. Shake gently to mix.

Nutrition information per serving: 80

calories, 25g carbohydrate, 0mg cholesterol, 2g dietary fiber, 8g fat, 4g protein, 170mg sodium, 6g sugar

[BOOKNOTES]

'The Lost Continent: Travels in Small-Town America' is another Bill Bryson gem

By MARISA MYHRE

With budgets tight this summer, it may be time to admit that a vacation may not be possible this year. I decided a while ago it was out of the question for me, so instead I decided to take a vacation from my couch.

I recently read, wrote about, and so thoroughly enjoyed Bill Bryson's "Life and Times of the Thunderbolt Kid" that I decided to pick up one of his other works. Since he is known for his travel writings it seemed perfect for this column.

"The Lost Continent: Travels in Small-Town America" is Bryson's cataloging of his trip wandering almost haphazardly across the United States.

It was first published in the late 1980s, so it is a bit outdated, but still a wonderful look at the United States. As Bryson left his home in Des Moines to go to England, escaping rolling corn fields and the threat of being drafted into Vietnam, he came back to America with a fresh eye to his home country.

In this book his main goal is to find the perfect town. He wants to find a place as seen in the television shows he grew up with. He's looking for the ideal back yards Beaver wandered.

In Des Moines he meets up with his mother, borrowing her Chevrolet to wander his way across the United States. First, he meanders south and east toward the coast, then north as far as Maine, coming back home through Michigan and Wisconsin. Months later he takes a winding path out west, through Arizona to California and then north and back through Montana and South Dakota into Minnesota and back into Iowa. By the end he has visited 38 states and seen many of the great tourist spots as well as several small towns barely on maps.

His trip is set down with the hilarity and sarcasm that has made Bill Bryson famous as a writer. What I like best about his writing is that to me, his Iowa upbringing seems to show. He speaks like someone I may have grown up with and has a familiar sense of humor.

The book acts not only as a travel guide, but also as a history guide. The tale of Croatoan is found in this book. At the battlefields of the civil war, Bryson gives the rundowns of the battles as his father related them to him as a boy. In Williamsburg, he tells about the first settlers, and criticizes some of the historical incongruities. He goes out of his way to visit Warm Springs because he heard that Teddy Roosevelt had died there and he always wanted to visit.

But what sticks out in this book is not so much him visiting Mount Rushmore or the Grand Canyon but his stops in tiny towns. It's

his wandering around town squares looking for his utopia, his spurning of sprawling Wal-Marts, strip malls, and fast food joints decked out in neon. His being kicked out of the only restaurant in a small town by rowdy Shriners who already laid claim to the place make the adventure real. Bryson adds hilarity to all these situations.

Or example, one line I could connect to very easily follows.

"I was headed for Nebraska. Now there's a sentence you don't want to have to say too often if you can possibly help it. Compared with it, Iowa is paradise. Iowa at least is fertile and green and has a hill."

He speaks fondly of the Midwest, saying as he came back to his mother's home at the end that he felt a certain sense of peace. While making fun of the farmers on tractors he's passing, he comments that he envies them their easy life and feels badly for mocking them. Obviously, part of his heart belongs here, and that's what lets him speak to me so personally.

I do have one warning for anyone picking up his books. Like many of our British cousins, Bryson isn't shy about cursing. It isn't often, but prepare for a few potentially upsetting words sprinkled in.

This summer if the economic situation has you a little skittish about spending hundreds of dollars on a vacation, then shell out a massive \$15 on a new copy (or \$5 for a used copy on amazon.com, or \$8 if you can find a used copy at Hastings) and take a country-wide tour with an intelligent and funny tour guide from your favorite, comfy chair.

Stay Put for Staycation By CLARE BILLS

When Dorothy was finally going home in the film "The Wizard of Oz," she clicked her ruby red heels together and repeated, "There's no place like home, there's no place like home." She awoke safe in her bed, with her own pillow.

If you agree there's "no place like home" you could be a candidate for a staycation ... a vacation that doesn't involve lost luggage, flight delays, traffic jams or the words "are we there yet?" The most popular definition of staycation in the online Urban Dictionary is: "A vacation that is spent at one's home enjoying all that home and one's home environs have to offer."

As the economy struggles and gas prices seesaw, staycations are a great way to squeeze some fun out of family budgets. Planning an enjoyable vacation-at-home can be a relaxing option but there are a few guidelines to maximize the adventure.

According to "The Great American Staycation," by Matt Wixon, we need to treat the week as a real vacation, choose a start and end date and travel no more than 100 miles and back in a single day. Fortunately in Central Iowa, there are plenty of daytrip possibilities within a 50-mile radius. Wixon said we should focus on what we can do, and maximize our hometowns. Discover activities, destinations and restaurants you may have overlooked and indulge

in a time where you shut down the television, video games and computer while throwing your schedule and diet out the window. Your staycation could involve day trips to nearby communities or a series of excursions around Ames on CyRide, which is fare-free this summer.

Finding activities to please everyone in your family will involve a bit of planning, and the Ames Convention and Visitor's Web site, www.visitames.com, is a great place to start, along with a copy of "Bulletin Board," a free magazine found at the Ames Public Library.

Choosing a theme may add more focus to your activities. Last summer I designed a week's staycation for my six-year-old granddaughter and 10-year-old niece revolving around our love of art. We painted with watercolors and acrylic paints, sketched at the butterfly wing at Reiman Gardens, decorated clay at Kil 'N Time, shopped at the Octagon, and toured the Brunnier gallery. We ended each day by photographing the colors of the sunset while eating ice cream on our deck.

Your activities will naturally be driven by the ages and interests of your family, but here are a few suggestions to get you started: Plan a spa day, tour a winery or experience a different aquatic center each day. Visit museums, art galleries, the Science Center of Iowa, Reiman

Gardens, Des Moines Botanical Center or the Iowa Arboretum in Madrid. Ride horses, the Boone Scenic Railroad, hot air balloons or the Story City Antique Carousel. Search out restaurants with ethnic appeal. In Ames alone you can eat your way around the world.

The ultimate staycation option is to create a place in your home that will provide relaxation and a micro vacation every time you use the space. Turn a bathroom into a spa or paint a mural on a bedroom ceiling or wall. Rework a room -- or part of a room -- to create a craft studio, sewing space, exercise gym, home library or a quiet corner for prayer and meditation. A week of sweat equity will add to the quality of your everyday life. Several years ago, we turned a cluttered, odd shaped room in our basement into a functional art studio. Visitors often remark that "it's like walking into a vacation," when they enter. Perhaps there's a room in your home needing a transformation and a new purpose.

Creating a sanctuary where we feel peaceful is a fabulous goal any time of the year. And enjoying what our community has to offer is a great way to experience a summer staycation. At night you can crawl into bed and hug your own pillow and fall asleep knowing, "There's no place like home."



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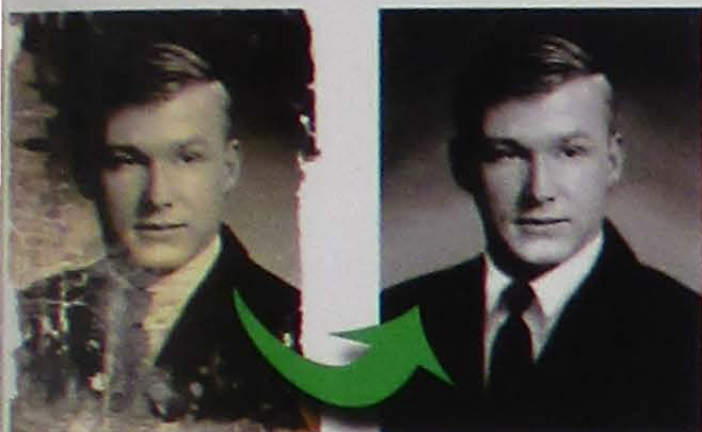


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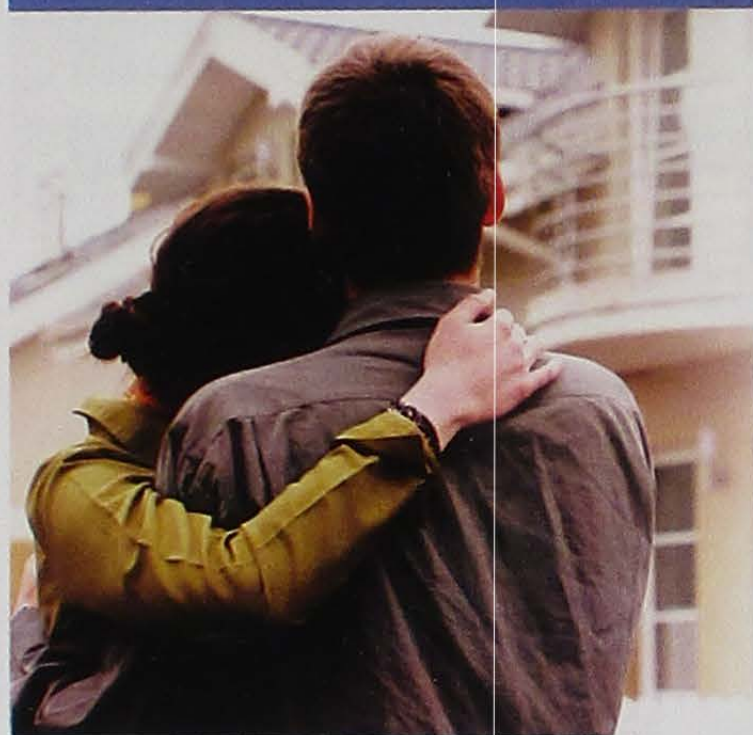
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Retirement: Illusion or Reality?

Visualize your Retirement; do you see retirement reality or are you looking at a retirement illusion? My definitions for purposes of this column:

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Illusion: being intellectually deceived or misled.

Reality: being grounded in facts.

Confident about Retirement

About 70 percent of U.S. workers say they are somewhat or very confident they'll have enough money to live comfortably in retirement¹.

... but Financially Unprepared

The National Retirement Risk Index, 2006² reports in 1983, 31 percent of us were financially unprepared to maintain our standard of living in retirement. By 2006, that number had risen to 44 percent. The math does not work; 70 percent of us think we are financially ready to retire but statistics say only 56 percent of us are prepared financially for retirement.

Why do we think we are well prepared for retirement when the statistics tell another story? This may be a classic case of conflict between what we hope is true and what is true; illusions and reality.

Separate Illusion from Reality

Illusion No. 1:

My retirement won't last that long.

Even though we know life expectancies have risen over the past 100 years many people don't plan for a lengthy retirement. The life expectancy charts tell us:

- Life expectancy of men 74
- Life expectancy of women 79³

If you are an average woman and retire at age 65 you will live 14 years after you retire.

Reality No. 1:

Retirement could last 20 to 30 years

Most life expectancy tables, including the numbers above, are based on life expectancy at birth. With each year you live your remaining life expectancy rises.

Today, based on the Society of Actuaries 2000 Mortality tables, if a female reaches age 65 she has a:

- 49% chance of living to age 89
- 23% chance of living to age 95

A married couple who are both living at age 65, have a 63 percent chance one of them will live to age 90 and a 36 percent chance of one of them living to age 95.

Living a long life is great especially if you planned for many years of retirement income. Here is a table to show the amount of money needed to provide \$50,000 annual income.

- Income begins at age 65
- Your money earns 6%
- Your income increases by 3% each year to keep up with inflation
- Taxes are not taken into account
- Money will be depleted at end of your life

You live to until	Amount of money needed
74	\$354,624
79	\$538,748
86	\$753,875
90	\$861,182
95	\$973,948

In the illustration above, if you lived to the from birth life expectancy (79), you would need \$538,748. But, if you lived to be 89, you would need an additional \$300,000.

These assumptions certainly may be very different than your personal assumptions; the purpose is to illustrate the value of using reality not illusions as you plan for retirement.

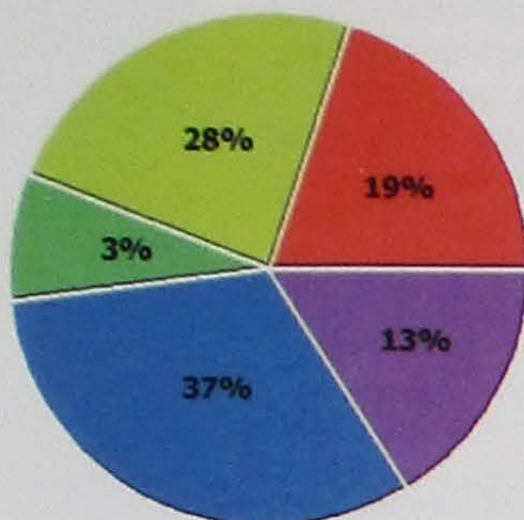
The Centers for Disease Control's Web site HYPERLINK "http://www.cdc.gov/www.cdc.gov can give you life expectancy statistics.

Illusion No. 2:

Someone will take care of me.

70 percent of American workers are confident they will have enough money to live comfortably in retirement. Expected sources of retirement income:

• Social Security	37%
• Pensions	19%
• Full /part-time jobs	28%
• Savings	13%
• Other	3%



Reality No. 2: You may be the "someone" that takes care of you.

Social Security has served retirees well for many years. Today it seems the Social Security system may be in trouble: When the system was created there were 42 workers for each retiree. Today there are 3.3 workers for each retiree.

Fewer and fewer companies are offering pensions. Some existing pensions are freezing and in some cases reducing benefits.

Your family may be able to help, but most of us want to be independent; even though we joke about our children supporting us, it would be difficult to ask for help. And your families may not be able to help. Families are smaller, many live far away, they have jobs, and with longer life expectancies, they may be approaching retirement themselves just as you need their help.

You may be the only one you really want to count on.

- Investigate all options to increase retirement savings.
- Don't borrow from your retirement investments.
- If you change jobs roll the accumulated retirement money to your IRA.
- Contribute to a traditional or Roth IRA.

Make sure your retirement plan is not an illusion.

Develop a retirement plan built on reality.

Next month: How long will you work? Should you invest in stocks? Why do you need a retirement plan?

because life is ... more than money

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¹The 2006 Retirement Confidence Survey, Employee Benefit Research Institute (EBRI) 4/07

²Center for Retirement Research at Boston College, National Retirement Risk Index, 2006.

³Period Life Table 2003, Social Security Administration, ssa.gov, 7/07

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Watch out for bedbugs when you're on vacation

By KATHY L. P. COOK, M.D.

Your long awaited summer vacation is finally here and you can't wait to check into your hotel, time share or other lodging for your well deserved rest. Now we need to consider doing one more bit of detective work at check in to avoid problems -- look for bedbugs. What?

Bedbugs have been reported in every state in the country and reports have been increasing in number for the past 10 years. Scientists feel that bed bugs were never eradicated with DDT pesticide use in the past, but instead were living in other hosts such as poultry. Bedbugs are now making their way back through poultry workers, increased international travel and because new pest-control methods that do not affect bedbugs. Bedbugs can arrive on luggage, clothes, bedding and furniture. Hotels, homeless shelters, furnished apartments and dormitories are most at risk.

Bedbugs are small about 1/5 of an inch, oval and red brown in color. Look for them or dark red spots on mattresses, box springs, bed frames and areas around the bed. They can also be in wall paper, cracks in the walls or floors, and behind pictures. They have a natural aversion to light and feed at early in the morning between 2 and 4 a.m. Our warmth and the carbon dioxide we exhale attract them. Their bites tend to be in groups or clusters and can't be felt at first. Not everyone reacts to the bites and they can be mistaken for mosquito bites. These bites typically

will itch as a reaction to the injected saliva. Mild reactions can be treated with over-the-counter hydrocortisone or calamine lotion. Scratching may lead to infection, which could require a visit to a physician for antibiotics and prescription topical steroids can help decrease the itch. Severe reactions with anaphylactic shock are rarely reported. There is concern that bedbugs can spread hepatitis or other infections however extensive testing in laboratory settings show this is unlikely.

Exterminating bedbugs can be difficult and may require professionals. Some interesting new methods of eradication are emerging. One uses the bedbug's own alarm pheromones and a dust that dries out their coating so they die. Other methods such as sanitizing (drying in a dryer at 120 degrees) or freezing for three days can be done.



Now that you are worried, what can a traveler do?

- Examine the room for potential hiding places of bedbugs such as carpet edges, mattress seams, pillow case linings, bed boards, wall trim or other tiny crevices in which bedbugs could hide.
- Look specifically at the mattress seams for signs of bedbug activity: Droppings, eggs, blood-stains or even bedbugs themselves.
- Keep a flashlight nearby while sleeping to immediately observe suspected activity during the night without having to get up out of bed, which would otherwise give them time to hide in safety.
- Don't leave clothing lying on the bed, or any location if possible.
- Close all luggage when not in use.
- Elevate luggage and any belongings off the floor to luggage stands, tables or chairs. Bedbug infestation is not a large problem at this time and hopefully will stay that way. However, it certainly does give new meaning to the phrase don't let the bedbugs bite.

Kathy L. P. Cook, M.D., Board Certified Dermatologist, Skin Solutions Dermatology

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[FOOD BITES]

A Cool Drink on a Summer Afternoon: Life Doesn't Get Better than This

By JOLENE PHILO

July is a beautiful month in the Midwest. But for those who can't spend the hot and hazy afternoons at the swimming pool, the muggy weather can test the endurance of the heartiest lowans.

If you're land-locked for most of the month, here are two cold drinks to help you get through the dog days of summer. To honor my 2009 healthy food resolution, these recipes are fruity and low in fat. Easy to prepare, they're a great way to introduce your children or grandchildren to cooking. Have the kids measure ingredients, squeeze the lemons, and learn to operate the blender.

Then take your cold drinks out to the porch and play a game or read a book together. Life doesn't get much better than that!

Orange Julius

1 6-ounce can frozen orange juice concentrate
1 cup milk
1 cup water
1/4 cup sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla

Put all ingredients in the blender and add 8 to 10 ice cubes. Blend well and serve immediately. Makes four 8-ounce servings.

Try lemon or lime julius by using lemonade or lime juice concentrate instead of orange juice.

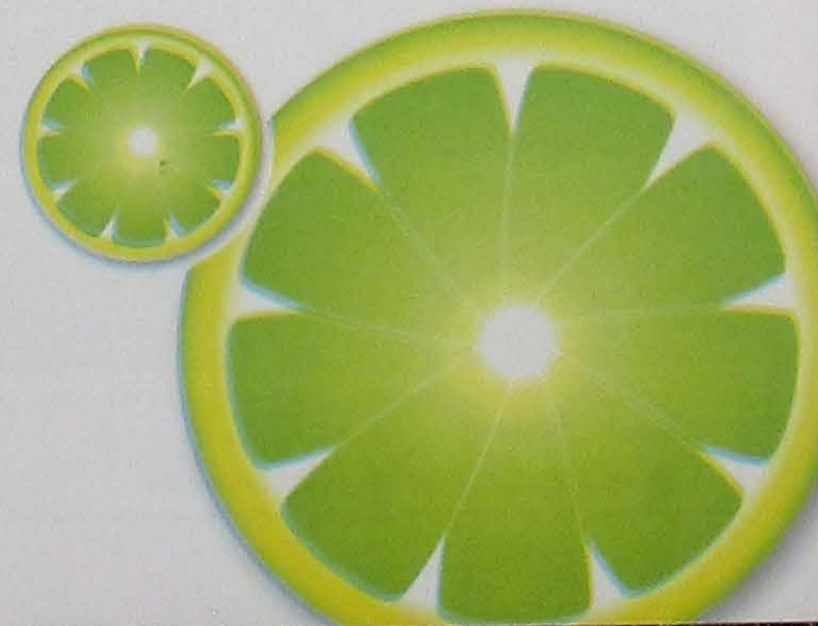
Replace the lemons in the frosty lemonade with limes for a cool flavor variation.



Frosty Lemonade

4 lemons
1/3 cup sugar
1 cup water
10 ice cubes

Squeeze lemons and remove seeds from juice. Put juice, water and sugar into blender. Add ice cubes a few at a time and blend until ice is chopped and mixture is frothy. Serves four.





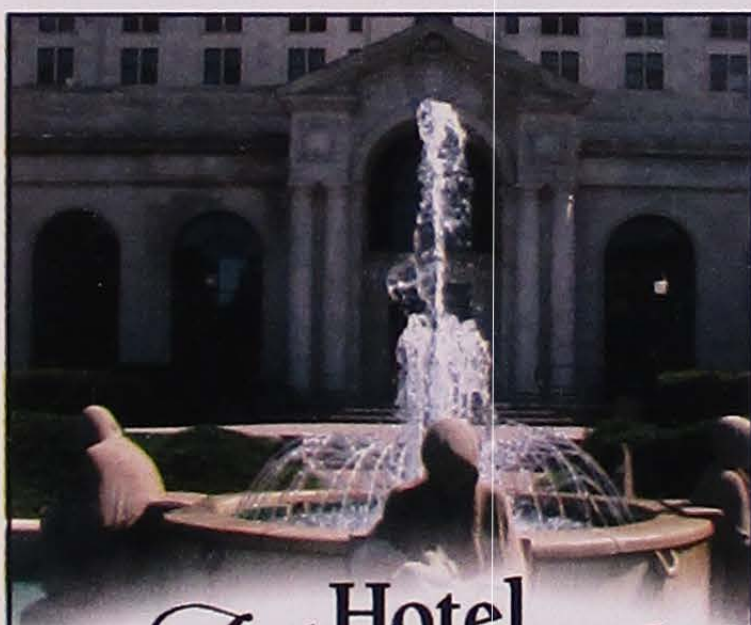
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'Jon & Kate' audience booms as couple's marriage sours

By COURTNEY LINEHAN



Once upon a time I was a typical graduate school student, searching endlessly for ways to avoid writing papers or grading exams. That's how, with the help of my roommate, Sarah, I discovered what would become the first television show since *Friends* that I actually built my schedule around: "Jon & Kate Plus 8."

Back then Jon and Kate Gosselin starred in a pair of hour-long specials chronicling their efforts to remain sane as they parented preschool-aged twins and sextuplets on the verge of becoming toddlers. Kate had brown hair and a belly still sagging after the strain of carrying six fetuses. Jon worked fulltime during the week, and then took over daddy duties on the weekend while Kate pulled double shifts as a nurse.

The kids, meanwhile, cooed into the camera as they played, pooped and drove their parents to the verge of hysteria.

Sarah and I would camp out in our living room for hours on end, devoted to the adorable babies and their slightly neurotic parents. As college kids, it reminded us of the childhoods so recently in our past and the parenthood so rapidly approaching in the future. The only downside to the program was the amount of protesting Sarah's boyfriend, Jeremy, produced every time we turned on TLC.

By the time I moved to Ames, the Gosselins' life had become a weekly television series following the family on trips to the dentist and Walt Disney World. While my job as *The Tribune* sports editor demands a certain minimum daily intake of SportsCenter, "Jon & Kate Plus 8" offered a comforting break from all the basketball games and steroid scandals. It was oriented toward women like me; the cuteness factor landed somewhere between newborn puppies and matching mommy-daughter Easter outfits, but all the boogers, bruises and emotional breakdowns rid it of the sugary sweetness that drained the shelf life from sappier shows.

What made me love 'Jon & Kate' was the overwhelming relate-ability of it. These were not overly religious parents who produced a dozen children and refused to utter a harsh word to each other if their kids remained in earshot. Nor were they poverty-stricken and packed into a cramped, dilapidated home. The Gosselins represented a growing segment of Middle America: a multicultural couple struggling to have children and dealing with the unexpected side effects of fertility treatments. They weren't preaching, just praying they'd survive.

I've continued watching "Jon & Kate Plus 8" regularly through all four seasons. I've turned off playoff basketball games to catch up on Cara's adventures in snowboarding or Hannah's attachment to her toy alligator. But now the weekly installments are no longer based on the basic themes that first attracted me to that crazy couple and their booming brood.

Each week the show has become less about

life with two sets of multiples and more about life with a TV show and two book deals. First, there were the occasional acknowledgements that yes, the tummy tuck and ski trip came free in exchange for an on-camera shout out. Then Jon quit his job and Kate became a bleached blonde, trading in her pink bathrobe for designer outfits. In the past few months they've moved into a gated, multimillion dollar house and the kids now talk about camera equipment and paparazzi with the ease of other children referencing Disney characters.

Now with Season 5 deep into production, Jon & Kate has lost the mass appeal that made it popular several years ago. I don't know what it's like to make tens of thousands of dollars a week just for living my life. Most parents can only dream of gratis trips to Hawaii, free front-row tickets to the hottest family entertainment and grocery budgets big enough to feed 10 people entirely organic diets.

The shift blasted from subtle to startling this past month as cheating scandals erupted around both Jon and Kate. It was so pronounced that TLC rushed out a season opener based on the trouble: photos of Jon and Kate ignoring each other at their sextuplets' birthday party appeared in tabloids on May 18 and video followed on the program a week later.

A few months ago Sarah and I met up for lunch, and our conversation shifted to that show we'd both continued watching long after our college lease ended. We talked about how fun it would be to follow the family throughout the kids' lives, how it would be nice to actually watch them grow up rather than end the Gosselins' run whenever their cuteness factor dipped.

In Season 5, though, Jon and Kate represent a different reality of the modern American couple: strain and stress leading to the possible disintegration of their partnership. As Kate declares her love of traveling, meeting fans and appearing on "Larry King," "Oprah" and the "Today Show," Jon laments the loss of his own professional life. Both Mom and Dad want to work, yet neither wants to leave their children with a fulltime nanny and neither is fulfilled by staying home with their eight kids. Jon complains about Kate's overbearing personality while Kate doesn't understand why he isn't thrilled to be the stay-at-home-dad while mommy jets to L.A.

The best thing for Jon and Kate Gosselin is probably to send the cameras away and work out how they plan to raise their children, whether it's together or apart. For the sake of their kids, they need to strip the Hollywood from their home and focus on returning to the basic principles viewers loved back when they were chubby, cranky, but clearly in love.

Courtney Linehan can be reached at (515) 663-6930, or clinehan@amestrib.com.

JULY calendar



THURSDAY, JULY 2

Ames Municipal Band will perform at 8 p.m. at Durham Bandshell Park in Ames.

SATURDAY, JULY 4

Fourth of July Festival begins at 10 a.m. in Bandshell Park in Ames featuring a parade, food vendors, music and other booths. Fireworks will cap off the celebration.

Fourth of July celebration, Reiman Gardens, open at 9 a.m. and will remain open until the conclusion of the Ames Jaycees fireworks display. Cost is free for CoHorts and ISU students, price of admission for general public.

TUESDAY, JULY 7

Story Time, Reiman Gardens, 10 a.m. to noon, "Digging into Rocks," cost is free for CoHorts, price of admission for general public.

THURSDAY, JULY 9

Brown Bag at Reiman Gardens, noon to 1 p.m., "Art in the Garden" with sculptor John Brommel. Cost is free for CoHorts and ISU students, price of admission for general public.

SUNDAY, JULY 12

Art Fair, Reiman Gardens, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., more than 70 artists will display their work. Live music, food and drinks will be available. Cost is free for CoHorts, \$5 for general public.

MONDAY, JULY 20

Tea at Terrace Hill, 11:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m.

TUESDAY, JULY 21

Lauren Christian Pork Chop Open, golf tournament and dinner, 10 a.m., Veenker Memorial Golf Course, registration deadline is July 6. Cost is \$85 per person, which includes golf, reception and dinner.

SUNDAY, JULY 26

Hy-Vee presents Shawn Johnson and Friends, An Evening of Music, Dance, and Shawn, at 7 p.m. at Wells Fargo Arena. Join Shawn and her dancing partner, Mark Ballas, and a host of your other favorite pro and celebrity dancers. Also joining Shawn in this celebration is Hannah Montana star Mitchell Musso performing music from his soon-to-be-released self-titled album. Tickets are \$32 to \$100 and are available at the Wells Fargo Arena Ticket Office, all Dahl's Foods locations, by phone at (866) 55-DAHLS, or online at dahlstickets.com.

THURSDAY, JULY 30

Brown Bag at Reiman Gardens, "Looking Back on a Great Summer," noon to 1 p.m., free for CoHorts and ISU students, price of admission for general public.

ONGOING

Lynn Kaiser Trio, 6 to 8:30 p.m., Thursdays, Olde Main Brewing Co. & Restaurant, 316 Main St., Ames.

Scottish country dance classes, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m., Fridays, second floor dance studio, Octagon Center for the Arts, 427 Douglas Ave., Ames, call Gayle at (515) 233-6841.

Argentine Tango, 4 to 4:30 p.m. introduction and beginning figure, 4:30 to 7 p.m. open dancing and intermediate figure, Sundays, Workspace, ISU Memorial Union, Ames, punch cards: \$28 ISU students for five punches, \$30 public for five punches.

Square dance lessons, 7 to 9 p.m., First Christian Church Disciples of Christ, 611 Clark Ave., Ames, call Fred Grow at (515) 432-7530.

"Contemplate Japan," through Aug. 9, Brunnier Art Museum, Scheman Building, Ames, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, 1 to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, free with \$3 suggested donation.

Oriental Snuff Bottles from the Permanent Collection, through Aug. 9, Brunnier Art Museum, entrance cases, Scheman Building, Ames, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, 1 to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, free with \$3 suggested donation.

"The Early Years: The Founding Model Farm and the College," Farm House Museum, ISU campus, Ames, noon to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

"Campus Cottages on the Iowa State Campus," 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays, Special Collections Reading Room, 403 Parks Library, ISU campus, Ames, free.

Maria Lux paintings exhibit, Gallery in the Round, through Aug. 10, reception July 17, 5 to 7 p.m., Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ames, 1015 N. Hyland Ave., Ames, call (515) 292-5960. Kooser Impact, through Aug. 2, Octagon Center for the Arts, 427 Douglas Ave., Ames.

meet a faceted woman

Laura Millsaps

Age: Old enough to know better, too young to care.

Position: Community Relations Coordinator, Mary Greeley Medical Center

Family: Sons Grant, 14, Noah, 9 and Ben and Joe, both aged 5.

What would you do with \$1,000 to spend on yourself? I've never won any money in my entire life. I'd like to think I'd be generous with it, but I'd probably buy a few pairs of shoes, too!

Your favorite motto: If you want it done right, do it yourself. I guess that makes me a control freak, doesn't it?

What makes you happy? Putting on house slippers at the end of the day, red wine, reading to my boys, getting lost in a good book.

What makes you feel confident? Wearing high heels makes me feel confident. I'm a tall woman, and feeling even taller always helps me feel like I can handle anything! (Except, perhaps, running!)

What makes you laugh? Watching my twins hug each other, because it usually ends in a wrestling match.

Do you believe in New Year's resolutions? Do you have one this year? I don't believe that you can convince yourself to make a change in your habits because of a date on a calendar. Changes will come when you are ready to commit your efforts to them, not a second before.

If you could do or be anything you want, what would it be? I would be a published writer of books. I love to read and write, and I'd love to have them both in a career.



Laura hanging out with some of her friends.

If you knew then what you know now, what would you have done differently? I always want to tell women in their teens and 20s not to pay so much attention to what others are doing, wearing, studying, listening to. What do YOU want to do? What do you like to do? Who do you love in your heart? God made you the way you are for a reason!

My idea of a nightmare job: A job that has only an automatic thought process, no creativity.

My simplest pleasure: My simplest pleasure is sleeping late when I get a chance. It feels like such an outrageous indulgence considering my usual schedule.

When I am an old lady: I will not wear pink sweatsuits, purple hats, or sturdy sneakers. I probably won't be very cooperative, either.

I am thankful for: My family and friends. I have a wonderful support system of people who believe in me even during those shaky times I don't have the courage to believe in myself.

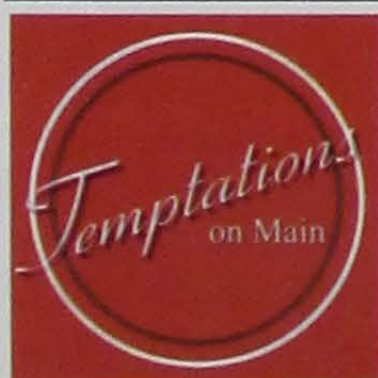
What financial advice would you give other women? No matter what your situation in life,



Laura makes Christmas cookies in 2008 with her son Ben, then age 4.

you deserve control over your finances, and money in the budget you can spend without anyone else's opinion or needs taking precedence. It's a way of taking care of yourself.

What kind of chocolate do you like prefer? If you want describe how you enjoy chocolate. I eat chocolate every day as part of my own personal stress management program. The darker and more expensive the better, but I will sneak chocolate chips right out of the bag if necessary!



WE SHIP & DELIVER!

What is your favorite kind of chocolate?

LAURA MILLSAPS

I eat chocolate everyday as part of my own personal stress management program. The darker and more expensive the better, but I will sneak chocolate chips right out of the bag if necessary!



PAID ADVERTISEMENT

No matter what your situation is The Ames Contracting Team can help...

Peggy and Terry Warren are enjoying this summer in style as they take in the beauty of the great outdoors from their brand new back deck. When they step inside, things are just as pleasant as they relax in the cool comfort created by a newly installed energy-efficient air conditioning system.

When the Warrens moved into their Ames home 12 years ago, a small concrete slab served as the only sitting area in their back yard and so it remained for more than a decade. "We didn't sit out there. We never spent time outside," recalled Peggy Warren. This summer the couple decided that needed to change. With one call to Ames Contracting Team, the Warrens enlisted the help of Geisinger Construction to build the deck. While they were at it,

they also hired Gibbs Plumbing, Heating & Cooling and Thompson Electric to install a new air conditioning system. "We thought as long as we were doing something, we might as well do it all," Warren explained.

Because children are frequent visitors in the Warren home it was extremely important to them to find family friendly contractors and Peggy Warren said the men at Ames Contracting Team fit the bill. "I was very impressed when they sailed in here," she explained. "They were so professional. They were always polite to each other and to us. They were very family-friendly." She added that they were also very conscientious about cleaning up after themselves each day, something of particular importance in a yard where children play.

With the work completed this spring, the Warrens wasted no time breaking in their new deck. They furnished their space with a new patio set and invited family and friends to a party celebrat-



ing their son's college graduation. They plan to do much more outdoor entertaining in the future and to make family barbeques a regular event. "It is so nice to be able to enjoy Mother Nature in the privacy of our own backyard," Warren said.

It was with nature in mind, that the Warrens chose to upgrade their air conditioning system as well. "We wanted something more energy-efficient, more Earth-friendly," Warren explained. She added that it didn't hurt that the new system promised to be friendlier to her family budget.

The Warren family is looking forward to a wonderful summer both inside and out but Peggy Warren is particularly excited about her new deck. "It is bright spanking new," she announced with enthusiasm. "I know its not a room but it is a really nice addition to our home. I am very happy we decided to do this."



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hue & cry

Definition: Any loud clamor or protest intended to incite others to action.

By MARY HALSTRUM
Facets Editor

Back in March, my husband, two daughters and I were really looking forward to heading to Utah come the end of May to visit my husband's family, our yearly family vacation. We had taken the same trip last year and had a great time; especially the part of it spent driving through Colorado. What a beautiful state. The drive to Redmond, Utah, took the better part of two days, along with an overnight stay in Colorado, but it was so much fun hanging out with my family in the car singing songs, checking out the scenery, and stopping along the way when we felt the need to look at something just a little bit closer.

Then came early April and a dreaded e-mail from my part-time employer in Riverside, Calif. The powers that be had made the decision to take the All Points Bulletin – the monthly magazine I put together in my basement office here in Iowa – in-house. My part-time job would end as of May 31. Poof. Just like that. And it was good money. Not as much as my full-time job, but significantly more than a typical

part-time position. So this was going to hurt. And the first thing to go would be the family vacation. I think my husband was the most disappointed out of all of us, but I was upset as well. I don't take a lot of vacation days. Never have. So when we made the decision to cancel our trip, I was sad too.

Luckily our daughters, Katharine and Rachel, will still get to spend some time with their grandparents as Kevin and I did the math and decided we could still afford to drive to Colorado and hand the girls over to his parents for a two-week visit. Even with gas prices going up, we've tightened our belts a lot, and the girls will be going on a summer vacation, but mom and dad won't be going with them. I'm a little worried about Rachel, who turned 3 in February, but I think she'll be OK as long as her big sis is with her. They'll get to ride horses, go swimming, take a trip to California to go to Disneyland, and soak up lots of love from their grandparents. In other words, they'll have a blast.

But for my husband and me – instead of

a vacation – a staycation is more inline with our budget this summer. Obviously it's not ideal, but it's just the way it is. And since the girls are going to be gone for what will seem to me like forever, there are several projects we hope to get done that we never seem to get around to when there are two little people running around the house all the time. These include shampooing the carpet, scrapbooking, cleaning my office in hopes of securing part-time work in the near future, and watching a movie rated higher than G. Maybe I'll even start that exercise program I've been thinking about. Maybe.

So even though the loss of my part-time income hurts us financially, it's not all bad. The other day as my daughters and I were walking to the park, my oldest daughter looked up at me and said, "You know, losing your magazine job was bad, but it was good too, because now you have more time to spend with me and Rachel." Having more quality time with my family, there's something you can't put a price on.

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Wednesdays, July 1 to August 19

5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

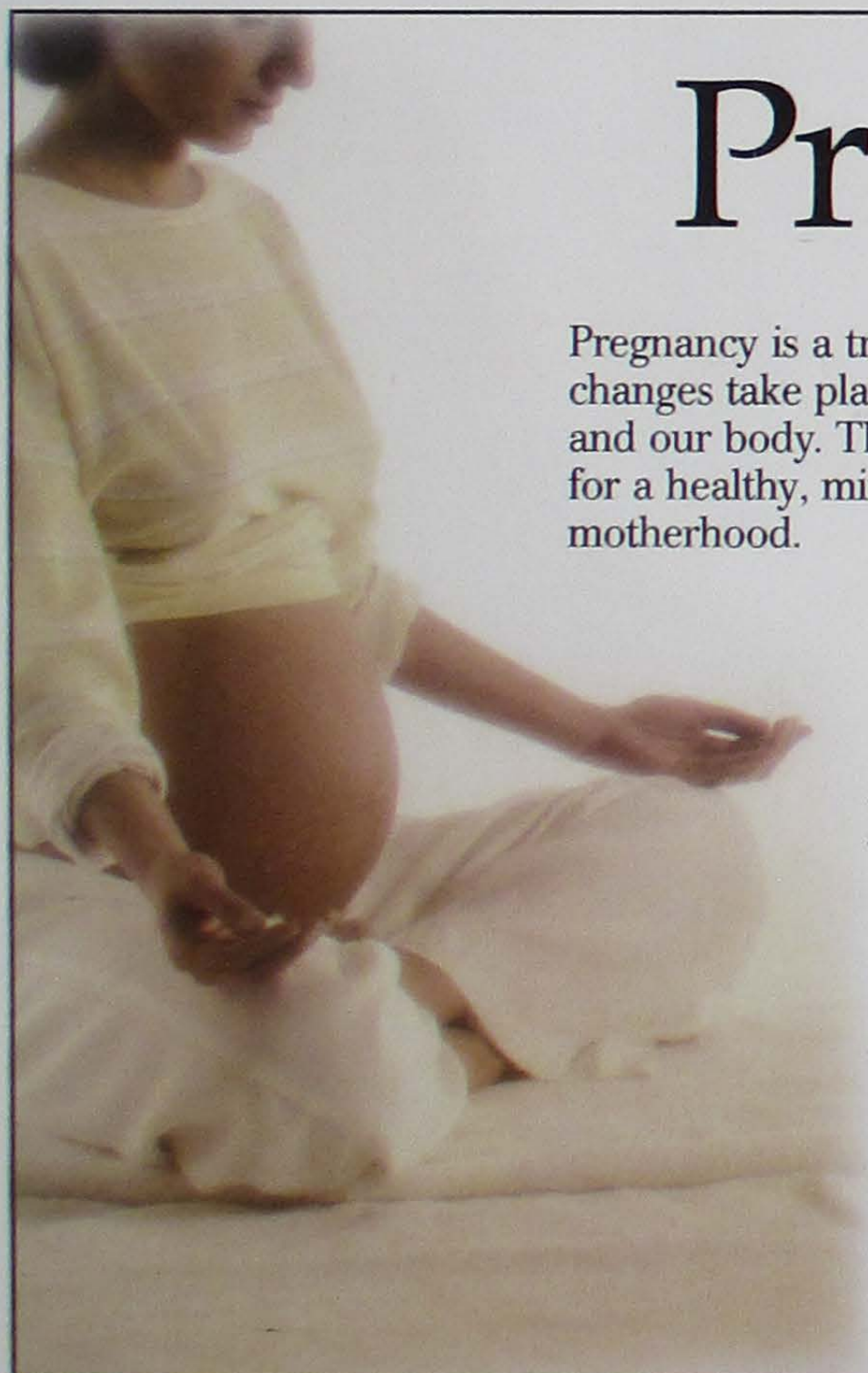
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